
From:
Sent: Friday, 4 July 2008 12:32 PM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

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Submission No. 905
(Inq into better support for carers)

04/07/2008.

Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
P O Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

I wish to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

My role as a carer has been constant every day for the past twelve years and ten months. My contributions to society have in the past been as a volunteer in school settings, school bus driver for weekly sport sessions, currently working in a volunteer capacity for Carers Queensland and in the past I have been secretary for a disability group. I have tried to attend university to gain higher education, however, the stress of full time caring plus normal household duties plus the added stress of trying to commit to my university studies has led to an irretrievable breakdown in my marriage. I think this should be recognised by removing the demands of Centrelink where I was TOLD to get a job or return to studies for 15 hours per week. 15 hours per week is full time study. I tried to tell them that I was not capable of doing as they requested, however they insisted, so I applied for university and was accepted. I failed to complete the year due to ongoing health issues with my son, and finally stress induced health issues with myself. My caring role affects my life by not always allowing me the time to clearly think through what has to be done on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis. I have found in the past that people think my son is odd and therefore they have avoided me too leading to a somewhat lonelier than normal existence. This stresses me as I have very few friends and my son's friends are limited to his school friends. I find it difficult financially because I only get \$358. for my two children still living with me plus I get the Child disability payment of \$100.00. Because of property interests that I can't substantiate figures for to Centrelink, I am struggling to survive on the above figures per fortnight. I have tried to address this issue with Centrelink and they insist I must find the information they need to settle my claim. However, since I walked out on my husband, family and home, I have not been able to find what they need and to obtain copies from the bank and elsewhere is totally out of my reach financially. The barriers I experience as a carer in finding and/or retaining employment are... no money to buy books to complete my degree, no access to an internet line because I cannot afford the phone, no

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money for rent .(I have to sell my house as I cannot pay the mortgage.) I cannot do full time work as I need to be available /on call for my son and to meet his bus to and from school.

The practical measures that would better support me are to 1. Centrelink settle my claim ASAP. 2 Scrap the Child disability payment and RECOGNISE all carers for the work they do and pay us a full supporting carers pension that would financially support us without the need to force us to live below the poverty line and/or force us to find work when we are too stressed to commit ourselves. Also, being on call means I cannot commit to full or part time work and I could not just walk away from a job when problems arise with my son.

I believe that placing parents of school age children into the workforce against their wishes is wrong and it is an unforgivable Act of Parliament to force the mothers/carers of children to re-enter the workforce or to study against their wishes. These parents/carers know better than any bureaucrat whether they can handle the stress or not of these demands and Government has to accept that our caring role for these kids is often much harder than we really can bear. Recognise us with a proper supporting carers payment that we can financially survive on and let us get on with the more important role of caring which is what we all are struggling to do.

This support would assist me to continue my role of volunteering as and when I can commit myself without the pressures of trying to find 15 compulsory hours per week.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the recommendations you make in order to improve support for carers.

Yours sincerely,

Marilyn